



National Council for Japanese American Redress

925 West Diversey Parkway, Chicago, Illinois 60614

February 9, 1981

Dear Friends,

January, 1981 may most be remembered in America as the month in which the Iran-U.S.A. hostage crisis was resolved. But it was also the month we began our fund drive in earnest for our lawsuit. It was the month we lost Amy Ishii. And when we waited, in vain, for the final appointments to the Study Commission.

I didn't tie a yellow ribbon. I didn't ring a bell. The return of the hostages, with all its hoopla, left me, I'm afraid, very sober. It was 444 days, according to Walter Cronkite, of captivity by the evil Muslim-student-terrorist-foreigners. When one of them said something like, "I hope this country never does something like that," he began to approach my own thoughts. According to the National Archives, I spent 803 days behind barbed wire. This country has already done it, only on a much larger scale. And there were no yellow-ribboned parades. Only \$25 and a one-way ticket. We Americans have such convenient memories.

I am sure that many Americans might have trouble with my equation. We weren't hostages, they might say. We weren't held by terrorists. America has always been a God-fearing country. How dare you equate us to Muslim-student-terrorist-foreigners?

Well, Michi Weglyn makes a good case for the hostage-reprisal theory for our internment in her excellent book, Years of Infamy. (We have copies available, by the way, at \$6.95 each.) When I had a chance to visit with her last year, she pointed out to me that at the time of our internment the U. S. had but one, single, solitary Japanese POW. And there were serious proposals by high government officials to use us as hostages to secure the safety of "American" citizens in Japanese hands. And there was great sensitivity by the State Dept. to the possibility of Japanese reprisals to American POWs in response to gross, public mistreatment of us. What else is a hostage?

And what else is a terrorist but a person who ignores the law and mistreats innocent people? Well, the law was all but ignored. We weren't even arrested. There was no suspension of the Writ of Habeas Corpus. (Suspension requires an overt act by Congress or the President. For us, it was ignored.) And while a hostage complained of mistreatment after being caught trying to escape, we were shot and killed. And you will recall that the Iranians released most blacks and women initially. But none was released in 1942, not women, not infants, not the elderly.

* * *

Others have written well about the death of Amy Ishii. But I need to add a word of my own. I first met Amy last March in New York. But earlier we had talked by phone and exchanged letters. During the early months of NCJAR's existence, Amy acted as our representative in L.A., even though it was often unofficially. She has always been able to speak out and say

her piece, whatever the audience. Dwight Chuman's column relates of her speaking out for the term "concentration camp" in an official plaque -- I would guess it was Manzanar's -- when no one else would. I've seen her challenge members of her own organization and ask for a show of hands from those who had written to their elected representatives in Washington. We didn't see eye to eye on everything. But she did what I lacked the courage to do. And she had great strength of spirit in the face of a death which was always close. She knew that she should have died long ago. She had had two bouts with cancer. Her heart was bad. It was the heart that gave up. But Amy was in there fighting the good fight to the very end. Although we shall all miss her, her life continues as a model for us to emulate. What she has given to each of us -- her will and her strength -- we can nurture in ourselves.

Peace to you, Amy. And your peace to all of us.

* * *

Congress seems to be as good in breaking its own laws as it is in passing them. The Study Commission bill was passed at the end of July, 1980. It stipulates that the Commissioners were to be appointed by the end of October, 1980. Here in February, 1981 they have yet to be appointed. And according to the same law, the first meeting of the Commission should have been held in December, 1980. But, of course, without the appointments the Commission can hardly convene. And all the while, not a word of protest from those "real nice people" in the Japanese American Citizens League.

On January 27 and 28 the Senate and House, respectively, passed S.253 which increases the number of Commissioners from seven to nine. This will allow House Speaker "Tip" O'Neill to name Father Robert F. Drinan, NCJAR's nominee, and Senate President pro tempore, Strom Thurmond, to name Father Ishmael Gromoff of the Priboloff Island people. Of course, these names are all unofficial until President Reagan signs S.253 and all the appointments are then announced. (I'd hate to stake my reputation on all the changes that have occurred unofficially.)

* * *

The fund appeal is rapidly approaching a moment of truth. We're at the \$18,000 mark. We want to start after raising \$30,000. And we want to start in early March. What we will start, if we start, is a year-long preparation for the introduction of our lawsuit. The lengthy preparation is necessary because we have serious obstacles to overcome. But it will give us a year to raise the entire \$75,000 of the projected cost for this phase. Once we start, we do not intend to stop for want of funds. And we are preparing for this contingency as well. It seemed wise to us to start with \$30,000 since this would give us more of a running start. So, the decision we must make, the moment of truth, is whether we proceed or not. If we reach \$30,000, the decision is clear and simple: proceed. If not, it will be agonizing.

What we need now are more Ronin, those who will contribute \$1,000 or more. We've just acquired our sixth and seventh Ronin. Although none of them has expressed a desire for notoriety, I do need to announce our sixth. He is Ralph Lazo. Ralph may be the only person who actually volunteered to be interned and had no extenuating reason to do so (such as having a J-A spouse), except that he wanted to go with his Nisei friends. As fate

would have it, Ralph, a high school student, was shipped to Manzanar, where I met him, while his friends went to Heart Mountain. As Ray Okamura wrote so movingly in his letter of support for Ralph as a Commissioner, if more people had followed -- maybe even heard about -- Ralph's simple act of courage and love, history may have been changed. His act was extraordinary in 1942. And we can see that he hasn't changed much since. I only wish that this time, others would follow his example.

We've received many \$10, \$20, \$100, \$200, and \$500 contributions and pledges as well. These we deeply appreciate. And if we had a large enough base of people to contact, this might be adequate. This base can be expanded if supporters would ask their friends and relatives or give us their names and addresses. We've run ads in New York, Los Angeles, and San Francisco, but they have not been as effective as our direct mail effort. If you have not yet made your pledge, please use the form on the last page. We need to know of your support now.

Finally, I received a welcomed note from an old friend (ex-Manzanar) who pledged \$100 even though she does not support redress for herself. As she says, she supports redress for others. For all I know, I may be partly responsible for her attitude. I remember a discussion we had decades ago about an essay by Milton Mayer who argued cogently that minorities had to support other minorities if their own appeals for justice were to be legitimate. I still believe that argument. But that doesn't mean you can't be for justice for yourself. So, I took the Golden Rule, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you," and formed the obvious corollary, "Do unto yourself as you would do unto others."

Peace,

William Hohri

William Hohri



A T-shirt you just can't get at
any ol' store.

\$7 each.

black symbol on blue, yellow, or
light brown

Sizes: small, medium, large, extra-large,
and child's

Also our button, black symbol on yellow,
goes for 50 cents.

SECOND THOUGHTS

Curiouser and curiouser.

After months of wondering just what kind of commission would come of the three-pronged selection process mandated by the law, we have to date five-sevenths of a panel whose duty it will soon be to "review the facts and circumstances surrounding Executive Order Numbered 9066, issued February 19, 1942, and the impact of such Executive order on American citizens and permanent resident aliens... including Aleut civilians, and permanent resident aliens of the Aleutian and Pribilof Islands" and ultimately to "recommend appropriate remedies."

We have also, incidentally, seen how casually and with no explanations the Congress and the White House have ignored terms of the law which created the commission (Public Law 96-317). If the law had been followed to the letter, the seven members of the commission would have been named by the end of October and their first meeting held by the middle of this month. As of this writing, House Speaker Tip O'Neill has not yet announced his two choices.

Late last month, Senator Warren Magnuson named former Senator Edward Brooke and former Senator Hugh Mitchell to the commission, and earlier this month President Carter released the names of his choices, Joan Bernstein, Arthur Flemming and William Marutani.

So far, so odd.

Hugh Mitchell, it turns out, was from 1933 to 1945 executive assistant to then California Senator Monrad C. Wallgren who belonged to the "Pacific Coast Delegation" which urged President Roosevelt to remove from the West coast "all persons of Japanese lineage and all others, aliens and citizens alike, whose presence shall be deemed dangerous or inimical to the defense of the United States."

As such, he must have been privy to discussions which preceded the drafting of the letter to the President, in which case would he not better be a witness before rather than a member of the panel hearing testimony?

The selection of William Marutani calls for special comment.

That he would accept the assignment at all and that the JACL submitted his name for consideration is surprising to say the very least.

Surely his presence on the panel diminishes the required objectivity of the commission and thereby its credibility, given his many public expressions of opposition to individual monetary redress and his preference for some very specific uses for any reparations which might be forthcoming.

What public expressions?

Judge Marutani writes a weekly column for the JACL's Pacific Citizen, called "East Wind."

For the July 6, 1979 issue of the P.C., he stated his basic position on redress (upon which he elaborated in subsequent columns) as follows:

"The suggestion that payment of money for the gross violations of my rights as an American and the ignominy of being summarily hauled off into concentration camps like a common criminal, is an anathema to me... No amount of money could repay, reimburse, restore what happened. And thus it is that I must differ with those who so assiduously, albeit with sincerity, seek individual reimbursement of \$25,000 per person, or any sum for individuals. I find it personally insulting as an American that my freedom, my liberty, my dignity can be 'bought.' And such a paltry sum at that.

"And yet at the same time, I favor the program of seeking redress from the government which caused our imprisonment. [Mr. Marutani was interned at Pinedale and Tule Lake, Calif.] Why? There are a number of reasons. The social mores of this society are founded upon acknowledging wrongdoing by some meaningful monetary measure...

"Also our society is civilized so that we disavow old biblical concepts of 'an eye for an eye.' And so I seek no retribution, no engendering of guilt feelings and certainly no physical revenge or demonstration. Rather, because *United States v. Hirabayashi* and companion decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court remain good law in this land... I, we, have no choice other than to turn to that right embedded in the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution: 'the right... to petition the government for a redress of grievance.' We owe it to our Nation.

"In so doing, however, to besmirch our motives with demeaning focus upon individual payments, destroys what should be a noble act on our part...

"But make no mistake about it; I repeat: I seek redress... If it were my choice, I would choose to place the redress sum into a trust fund and based upon a pre-established standard, use the yield, and principal if need be, for the benefit of all deprived and needy in our land, without regard to race, creed, color, sex or national origin. That, in my mind, would be a fine tribute to our Issei. And to ourselves."

In his Nov. 9, 1979 column, Mr. Marutani wrote,

"I've no doubt as to the sincerity and the good intentions of those who seek direct, individual payments and who oppose the commission route.

"... But I suggest to you that payment alone individually or otherwise, [italics added] will accomplish nothing. We would continue to have abysmal ignorance prevailing among our fellow citizens as to what happened, right in this proud and mighty land, when some 120,000 of its citizens and their parents were summarily herded, like so much cattle, into barbed wire compounds. Hence, mere payment would in no manner be a deterrent; no lesson would have been learned."

Continuing to insist that he has no interest in "money as such," he has also written [Sept. 29, 1978] that "such is the magnitude of the gross obscenity perpetrated upon Americans and their Issei parents that the redress amount must be one that is 'felt.' Otherwise, it will lack impact, it will have no meaning, it will not be a lesson for the future."

In still another article [Aug. 3, 1979], Mr. Marutani spelled out, to the billion, what he considered might be suitable reparations for "what was ignominiously inflicted upon my Issei parents, my brothers and me." He calculated that for property loss only, a claim for \$3.162 billion could not be deemed unreasonable.

For someone who has expressed such *decided* views on redress (for or against is irrelevant), and who is a professional jurist, to sit on a panel which is charged with conducting a thorough and *objective* study of the subject is more than a little puzzling. As anyone who has ever been summoned for jury duty must concede, potential jurors for the most uncomplicated of cases undergo a more stringent examination of their attitudes than apparently Judge Marutani received.

—Takako Kusunoki

New York Nichibei

Thursday, January 29, 1981

Amy Uno Ishii, Dead At 60, Was Teacher, Advocate for Nikkei

Amy Uno Ishii, Japanese American resource consultant, longtime Little Tokyo activist and one of the prime movers in the present redress/reparations campaign, suddenly passed away from a heart attack on January 21, in Los Angeles.

For 20 years Amy Ishii has been researching evacuation material and has been giving educational presentations as a "prof/expert" in her field for teachers, students, organizations and concerned people, especially in the Asian Studies departments and Japanese organizations. Her 15-minute slide presentation of America's concentration camps set to appropriate music, has become familiar to Japanese on both coasts.

Her last year of work saw her traveling across the continent and also to Hawaii. She was here in New York last March when she participated in the Asian American law students conference at N.Y.U. and also a New York JAACL symposium. She was also invited to speak at the University of Hawaii's Asian Studies class, and she ended up giving five more presentations, as many people in the Islands were unfamiliar with the Japanese American experience on the mainland.

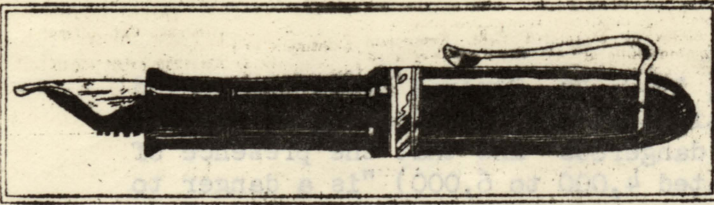
She closed out the year with a three-day exhibit at the convention center for Japan Expo '80, and participated in the first national conference on redress/reparations.

She would have been this year's keynote speaker at the Santa Clara College "Day of Remembrance" program.

Although disabled by illness since 1968, she had been a tireless volunteer worker involved in the Los Angeles Japanese communities on many levels, as teacher, media person, Nisei leader, Asian movement activist, cultural supporter and friend and confidante to the Sansei.

Amy Uno Ishii was born on Dec. 11, 1920, in Salt Lake City, Utah, as the fifth of 10 children of Mr. and Mrs. George K. Uno. The family moved to Los Angeles where she was raised and educated until evacuation in 1942, when she was sent to Santa Anita. Her father was interned in a separate camp for the "potentially dangerous." She also spent time in Heart Mountain camp in Wyoming and Amache camp in Colorado. She was first married to Alfred Tanaka of Honolulu in 1942; widowed in 1949; and remarried in 1952 to Jack Ishii. Among those she leaves behind are four children, Arlene, Arthur, Ken and Robert, and four grandchildren.

—Mary Kochiyama



Amy

Recently, while crossing a Little Tokyo street on my way to lunch, a voice called out my name and I looked around to see who it was. Amy Ishii, a Nisei woman who I have run into frequently during my seven years here at the Rafu waved and smiled at me from her car. I waved back, the light turned green and she drove on her way. I laughed to myself then, "Amy's always busy—heading someplace for some group, getting photocopies, taking pictures..." I couldn't know that just a few days later, I would be writing her obituary.

A lot of people couldn't handle Amy. She stood up and spoke out at meetings, whether they were Japanese American Citizens League meetings where she smelled something fishy going on, or meetings where there weren't any Japanese Americans at all.

We'd cross paths at a lot of unexpected places—in Gardena, at the criminal courts building covering a trial, in the Crenshaw area, on the Westside, all over. Once when a woman was arguing against the erection of a plaque at the former site of a World War II concentration camp for Japanese Americans, only Amy, out of a roomful of Nisei 442nd veterans and former camp inmates, spoke out and challenged her.

Amy traveled up and down the West Coast and throughout the rest of the nation with her tape recorder and slide projector in tow to give presentations to all sorts of groups on the history of Japanese America and about the wartime relocation and internment experience.

And, there was that time a couple of years ago. Mrs. Ishii came into the Rafu office. We sat down in the lunch room. "People just don't listen to me." She was frustrated to the point of tears over the fact that there wasn't much enthusiasm for a "Day of Remembrance" that was being organized for the day Roosevelt issued the infamous Executive Order 9066. It wasn't so much that she wasn't being allowed to plan the event. She was more upset that more people weren't getting involved.

Many still refer to Amy as "the sister of Edison Uno," the legendary Nisei civil libertarian. She deserves more.

You could see it in her eyes. She had a fine obsession, and there is no one who can take her place. We've suffered an important loss.

—DWIGHT CHUMAN

Rafu Shimpō Jan. 26, 1981

The New York Nichibei Jan. 29, 1981 ▶



National Council for Japanese American Redress

INFORMATIONAL BULLETIN NO. 2

Collaboration Promotes Segregation

In his letter, dated August 23, 1942, Lt. General DeWitt expressed his concern to the Army Chief of Staff that the "co-mingling of Kibei indoctrinated in Japan with Nisei¹ is dangerous" and that the presence of substantial numbers of Kibei (estimated 4,000 to 6,000) "is a danger to national security." He proposed that the War Dept. institute a project to segregate Kibei from Nisei under the following plan:

1. Determine the identity of Kibei through a survey of Immigration and Naturalization Port of Entry records and through the "use of information obtainable from co-operative Nisei."
2. Separate all such Kibei under federal supervision (those already interned) from Nisei.
3. Take away U. S. citizenship from all such Kibei. Intern them for the duration of the war and repatriate them as soon as possible. (This step would include all Kibei, whether interned or not.)

This proposal followed a 16-page report by an Issei² block leader in Manzanar, who called for drastic measures. He proposed the segregation of loyal American citizens from the disloyal, "pro-Axis elements" in the camps, regardless of the disruption of families. "You cannot compromise with loyalty," he wrote. He recommended:

1. A special hearing board to allow loyal Issei to remain with the "citizens' camp" in an "American community" environment.
2. A thorough investigation of the "pro-Axis propaganda and influence being spread in Manzanar.
3. A requirement of U. S. citizenship for membership in the camp's self-governing body.
4. The opportunity for renunciation of U. S. citizenship by Nisei and Kibei and the expatriation of such renunciants to Japan.

This report, though well-intentioned, was a disaster. Many Issei came to this country as infants and children and were raised as Americans. A Kibei, of course, was born in America and spent some time in Japan receiving part of their education. Its effect was to lump all these into a single category of disloyal. Moreover, this crude dichotomy between loyal and disloyal pushed protest and resistance into the category of disloyal. Joe Kurihara, a true American patriot, became disloyal when he protested in the finest American tradition the outrage of the camps. Harry Ueno became disloyal when he protested the unequal distribution of food in the messhalls. The young men who resisted the draft as long as they were to be drafted from behind barbed wire became disloyal.

notes: 1) Kibei are American-born but educated in Japan. Nisei are American-born.
2) Issei are first-generation, born in Japan.

Ignoring the Writ of Habeas Corpus

"The writ's sole function is to release from unlawful imprisonment."

The New Columbia Encyclopedia

Mitsuye Endo filed a petition for a writ of habeas corpus on July 13, 1942 in the Federal District Court at San Francisco. She alleged that she was unlawfully confined in a camp by the order of the Commanding General of the Western Defense Command. Her petition was denied, an appeal taken, and the case certified to the Supreme Court. Two years later, Commanding General Bonesteel wrote to the Assistant Secretary of War stating that nothing in Miss Endo's record warrants her continued exclusion from the west coast. The Secretary's reply was, ". . . you should issue Miss Endo a certificate which permitted her to return to the West Coast [under Public Law 503] but which did not grant her permission to leave the center [under Executive Order 9066]."

This kind of machination led to the unbelievable delay of 2½ years (for a procedure that should take about 2½ hours). In December, 1944, the Supreme Court ruled in Miss Endo's favor. And the order was issued to close the camps.

Racism as American as Apple Pie and FDR

On April 17, 1943, U. S. Attorney General Francis Biddle wrote to President Franklin Roosevelt:

"You signed the original Executive Order permitting the exclusions so the Army could handle the Japs. It was never intended to apply to Italians and Germans."

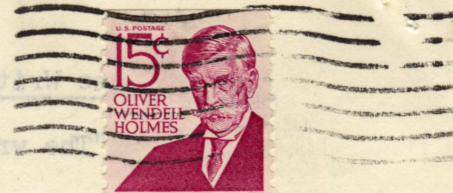
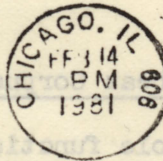
Parental Contamination

By 6:30 a.m. on December 8, 1941, some 733 Japanese aliens were "tagged and arrested" in all parts of the United States. Many were shortly released; hundreds, eventually thousands, were placed under federal supervision by the Dept. of Justice and interned in detention centers, quite separate from the War Relocation Centers. The families of many of these internees petitioned to join their fathers and husbands. On November 6, 1942, the Assistant Secretary of War writes in a letter to the Director of the WRA:

"While ordinarily I would favor any steps toward family unity in appropriate cases, I am not particularly enthusiastic about a wholesale transfer which would subject the Nisei to further Issei contamination."

Aiko Herzig & Wm Hohri

NATIONAL COUNCIL for
JAPANESE AMERICAN REDRESS
925 West Diversey Parkway
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MS SASHA HOHRI

IT'S TIME TO STAND UP AND BE COUNTED We Have Been Silent Too Long!

The United States of America deliberately violated the Constitutional rights of Japanese Americans during WWII by forcing them from their homes and placing them into concentration camps. We went obediently then. We have remained largely silent since.

But no more!

A class action suit will be filed against the United States to obtain compensation for all the victims. The National Council for Japanese American Redress has secured the support of an outstanding Washington law firm to initiate this suit. It will cost about \$75,000 to do the legal research and legislative work to make the suit possible. It will not be easy. It will not be cheap.

We appeal to you directly for help. We have no wealthy donors, no institutions, no membership base, no grants. We have literally only ourselves.

It's time for you to take your history into your own hands. Join in the action! Send your pledge today!

mail to: **National Council for Japanese American Redress**
1428 West Thorndale
Chicago, IL 60660

Please accept my pledge* and my vote to proceed:

- \$1000 as one of the Forty-seven Ronin.**
- \$100 and my hope that hundreds more will do the same.
- \$.....and my very best wishes for success.

Name:.....
Street:.....
City:..... State:..... Zip:.....

*Note 1: We are asking for pledges until we have a Redress Legal Fund established with a major Protestant denomination.

**Note 2: The Forty-seven Ronin, in a famous Japanese story, obtained justice through their self-sacrifice. We have five so far. Only forty-two to go.